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EMOTIONAL STABILITY AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE AS CORRELATES OF DRUG ADDICTION AMONG IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN EDO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between emotional stability, social intelligence, and drug addiction among in-school adolescents in Edo State, Nigeria. Guided by personality and social learning theories, the study adopted a correlational survey design with a sample of 400 secondary school students selected through multistage sampling. Three standardized instruments were used for data collection: the Emotional Stability Scale (ESS), the Tromsø Social Intelligence Scale (TSIS), and the Drug Addiction Questionnaire (DAQ) developed by the researcher. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression. Results revealed a significant negative relationship between emotional stability and drug addiction ($r = –.46$, $p < .01$), as well as between social intelligence and drug addiction ($r = –.39$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, emotional stability ($\beta = –.38$, $p < .01$) and social intelligence ($\beta = –.27$, $p < .01$) jointly predicted 32% of the variance in drug addiction ($R = .57$, $R^2 = .32$, $F(2, 397) = 93.42$, $p < .01$). These findings suggest that adolescents with higher emotional stability and greater social intelligence are less likely to engage in drug use. The study highlights the importance of school-based interventions aimed at strengthening students' psychological resilience and social competence as preventive strategies against substance abuse. Recommendations include integrating counselling, stress management, and social skills training into secondary school curricular in Edo State.

Keywords: emotional stability, social intelligence, drug addiction, adolescents, Edo State

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social transitions. During this period, individuals strive to establish their identity, develop autonomy, and navigate increasingly complex social relationships. While these changes are natural and necessary for growth, they also heighten vulnerability to risky behaviors. In the Nigerian context, in-school adolescents encounter unique stressors that compound these challenges. Academic demands such as pressure to excel in examinations, heavy workloads, and competition for scarce tertiary admission opportunities seem to create a

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climate of tension and anxiety. Socio-economic difficulties, including financial instability, parental unemployment, and limited access to adequate resources, further constrain adolescents' coping capacities. In addition, peer influence plays a significant role, as young people are often susceptible to adopting the behaviors and lifestyle choices of their social networks, whether positive or negative (Adeosun & Ojarikre, 2024).

These combined pressures seem to predispose adolescents to maladaptive coping strategies, among which drug use has emerged as a growing concern. Drug addiction, defined as the compulsive and harmful use of psychoactive substances, despite adverse consequences, has been increasingly documented among secondary school students in Edo State. Commonly abused substances include cannabis, tramadol, and codeine, all of which are relatively accessible and widely circulated among youth populations (Okogun, 2023). The rise in drug use among adolescents is alarming, as it not only jeopardizes their physical and mental health but also undermines academic performance, disrupts family relationships, and increases the likelihood of long-term socio-economic instability. This issue requires a deeper understanding of the psychological and social correlates of drug addiction, such as emotional stability and social intelligence, which may serve as protective factors against substance abuse.

Psychological traits such as emotional stability and social intelligence have been widely recognized as protective factors that can mitigate adolescents' susceptibility to risky behaviors, including drug use. Emotional stability is commonly understood as the ability to regulate one's emotions, manage stress effectively, and maintain composure in the face of challenges or pressure (Ojedokun, 2023). Adolescents who demonstrate higher levels of emotional stability are better equipped to cope with academic demands, peer pressure, and socio-economic stressors, thereby reducing the likelihood of resorting to maladaptive coping mechanisms such as substance abuse. Conversely, low emotional stability is associated with impulsivity, heightened vulnerability to stress, and a diminished capacity to handle adversity, all of which increase the risk of engaging in harmful behaviors.

Similarly, social intelligence has been identified as an essential trait in fostering adaptive social functioning. First conceptualized by Thorndike (1920) as the ability to understand and manage people effectively, the construct has since been refined by scholars such as Salovey and Mayer (1990), who emphasized its role in perceiving, understanding, and navigating complex social dynamics. Adolescents with strong social intelligence are more likely to form supportive peer networks, resist negative peer influence, and employ effective communication and problem-solving strategies in challenging situations. On the other hand, students with weak social intelligence may struggle with interpersonal relationships, fail to recognize and manage peer pressure, and adopt maladaptive behaviors such as drug use as a means of social acceptance.

Emotional stability and social intelligence play complementary roles in fostering resilience and competence among in-school adolescents. Their presence not only reduces vulnerability to drug use but also supports healthy emotional development, positive social adaptation, and improved academic outcomes. This study therefore examined emotional stability and social intelligence as correlates of drug addiction among in-school adolescents in Edo State.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Drug addiction among in-school adolescents in Edo State has become a growing concern, with increasing reports of students abusing substances such as cannabis, tramadol, and codeine. Despite school sensitization programmes and regulatory efforts, many adolescents continue to experiment with or become dependent on drugs, leading to declining academic performance, behavioural problems, and long-term health risks. While factors such as peer influence, socio-economic stress, and exposure to drug-using environments are commonly identified, the role of individual psychological traits has received less attention.

However, limited empirical evidence exists on how emotional stability and social intelligence relate to drug addiction among adolescents in Edo State. This gap makes it difficult for schools, counselors, and policymakers to develop targeted interventions that strengthen students' psychological resilience. Therefore, this study investigates emotional stability and social intelligence as correlates of drug addiction among in-school adolescents in Edo State.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in two interrelated theoretical perspectives: Eysenck's Personality Theory and Bandura's Social Learning Theory, both of which provide a useful lens for understanding the relationship between emotional stability, social intelligence, and drug addiction among in-school adolescents.

Eysenck's Personality Theory emphasizes that individual differences in behavior can be traced to core personality dimensions, including neuroticism (the inverse of emotional stability). According to Eysenck (1990), individuals high in neuroticism tend to be emotionally unstable, easily stressed, and more prone to maladaptive coping behaviors such as drug use. Conversely, emotionally stable individuals are more resilient, better able to regulate their emotions, and less likely to engage in risky behaviors. In the context of this study, adolescents with higher emotional stability are expected to demonstrate lower vulnerability to drug addiction because they can manage stress, anxiety, and peer influence more effectively.

Complementing this personality perspective, Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) posits that behavior is learned through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within social contexts. Adolescents acquire behaviors by modeling peers, family members, or societal figures, especially when such behaviors are rewarded or normalized. Social intelligence, which involves the ability to understand and navigate social situations, becomes a key determinant in this process. Adolescents with high social intelligence are better positioned to resist negative peer influence, choose prosocial role models, and manage interpersonal pressures that may lead to drug use. Those with poor social intelligence, however, may lack the competence to resist deviant peer groups and thus be more vulnerable to substance abuse.

Integrating these two frameworks, the study assumes that adolescent drug addiction is shaped both by internal personality traits (emotional stability) and external social processes (peer influence, as moderated by social intelligence). The intersection of socio-economic challenges and exposure to drug markets increases adolescents' susceptibility to substance use. Within this context, the theoretical perspectives offer valuable insights into why some students become vulnerable to drug addiction, while others demonstrate resilience.

2.2 Emotional Stability and Drug Addiction

Emotional stability, often regarded as a central dimension of personality, reflects an individual's ability to withstand stress, regulate emotions, and maintain psychological balance in the face of challenges. It encompasses resilience, adaptability, and the capacity to remain composed in situations of uncertainty or pressure. Among adolescents, emotional stability plays a particularly important role, as this developmental stage is marked by rapid psychological, social, and cognitive changes that often test one's coping mechanisms.

Adolescents with low emotional stability are more prone to emotional disturbances such as anxiety, depression, irritability, and impulsivity states that have been consistently linked to substance abuse and other maladaptive coping strategies (Adeboye & Salami, 2022). Such individuals may turn to drugs as a way to self-medicate, reduce distress, or escape from overwhelming life circumstances. For example, heightened impulsivity may drive experimentation with psychoactive substances, while chronic anxiety or depressive symptoms can increase reliance on drugs to achieve temporary relief. Over time, these maladaptive behaviors contribute to a cycle of dependency and addiction that is difficult to break.

In contrast, emotionally stable adolescents tend to demonstrate healthier coping strategies, such as problem-solving, seeking social support, or engaging in constructive activities. Their capacity to manage academic stress, navigate peer influence, and deal with family-related challenges reduces the likelihood of resorting to substance use as a coping mechanism (Ojedokun, 2023). Emotional stability thus acts as a protective buffer, enabling students to regulate negative emotions effectively and maintain focus on long-term goals such as academic achievement and personal development.

In a study among Nigerian secondary school students, Bello and Olukoya (2023) reported that those with lower emotional stability exhibited significantly higher tendencies toward cannabis and codeine use. Similarly, Ojedokun (2023) found that adolescents with greater emotional stability were better able to cope with peer pressure, academic stress, and family difficulties without resorting to substance use, suggesting that emotional stability functions as a protective factor against drug addiction.

The relationship between emotional stability and drug use among in-school adolescents highlights the importance of cultivating psychological resilience through school-based interventions and mental health programs. Counseling services, emotional regulation training, and stress management workshops can enhance emotional stability, thereby reducing the vulnerability of adolescents to drug addiction.

2.3 Social Intelligence and Drug Addiction

Social intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, interpret, and respond effectively to social cues, as well as the capacity to build and sustain meaningful interpersonal relationships. It encompasses skills such as empathy, social awareness, and effective communication, which enable individuals to navigate complex social environments with competence. Among adolescents, social intelligence plays a vital role in determining the quality of peer interactions and the choices made in response to social influence.

In-school adolescents with high levels of social intelligence are generally better equipped to form constructive peer networks, establish supportive friendships, and avoid associations that may expose them to risky behaviors. Their capacity to recognize negative peer pressure and negotiate social situations assertively makes them less susceptible to the influence of peers who engage in drug abuse (Chinonso & Yusuf, 2023). By fostering positive peer affiliations, socially intelligent adolescents gain access to prosocial role models and environments that reinforce healthy behavior patterns, further reducing the likelihood of substance use.

On the other hand, adolescents with low social intelligence may struggle to interpret social signals accurately or to resist the subtle yet powerful pressure exerted by deviant peer groups. Such students often experience social exclusion, miscommunication, or difficulty maintaining healthy relationships, which can leave them vulnerable to negative influences. When faced with peer groups that normalize or glamorize drug use, socially disadvantaged adolescents may lack the assertiveness or social competence needed to resist, thereby increasing their risk of drug involvement (Ali & Ibrahim, 2024).

Evidence from Chinonso and Yusuf (2023) indicated that adolescents with high social intelligence were more likely to build prosocial relationships and resist peer influence that could lead to drug use. Ali and Ibrahim (2024) further observed that students with higher levels of social intelligence demonstrated stronger peer negotiation skills and conflict resolution abilities, which reduced their involvement in risky behaviors such as drug abuse. Musa and Adekeye (2023) similarly emphasized that socially intelligent adolescents tended to affiliate with prosocial peer groups, which not only enhanced their academic adjustment but also lowered the likelihood of exposure to deviant peer networks. In contrast, adolescents with poor social intelligence were reported to struggle with negotiating peer pressure and avoiding drug-using groups, which increased their vulnerability to substance abuse.

The implications of this relationship underscore the importance of developing social competence as part of preventive efforts against drug abuse in secondary schools. Programs that teach communication skills, empathy, conflict resolution, and peer negotiation strategies can enhance adolescents' social intelligence. In turn, these interventions may strengthen their ability to withstand peer pressure, reduce involvement with deviant peer networks, and promote resilience against drug addiction.

2.4 Context of Adolescents in Edo State

Edo State presents a unique context for examining adolescent drug use, as the interplay of socio-economic disparities, rapid urbanization, and the increasing availability of illicit substances shapes the developmental experiences of in-school adolescents. In particular, the growth of urban centers such as Benin City has created environments where students are more frequently exposed to drug markets and peer networks that normalize substance use. Recent surveys indicate that cannabis, tramadol, and codeine-based syrups are among the most commonly abused substances by secondary school students in these areas (Okogun, 2023).

Okogun (2023) reported that secondary school students in Benin City are increasingly exposed to cannabis, tramadol, and codeine-based syrups, largely due to their easy accessibility. Eze and Omoruyi (2023) similarly highlighted a growing trend of tramadol and codeine use among

adolescents in urban neighborhoods of the state, linking this to weak regulatory enforcement and heightened peer influence. Aisien and Igbinedion (2024) also found that socio-economic pressures, particularly poverty and unemployment, indirectly increased the risk of adolescent substance use by heightening stress levels and limiting access to recreational or supportive alternatives. Taken together, these findings suggest that while emotional stability and social intelligence are protective traits, their influence interacts with contextual factors in Edo State, where socio-economic and environmental challenges amplify the risk of adolescent drug addiction.

These realities underscore the urgent need to investigate the psychosocial factors that predispose or protect adolescents from drug involvement. While structural determinants such as poverty, family background, and school environment remain important, individual psychological traits—specifically emotional stability and social intelligence play a critical role in shaping how adolescents respond to stress, peer influence, and risky social environments. Exploring these traits provides insight into the mechanisms through which some students develop resilience and resist drug use, while others succumb to addiction despite similar external exposures.

2.5 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between emotional stability and drug addiction among in-school adolescents in Edo State?
2. What is the relationship between social intelligence and drug addiction among in-school adolescents in Edo State?
3. Does emotional stability and social intelligence jointly predict drug addiction among in-school adolescents?

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study employed a correlational survey design to establish the relationship among the variables.

Population: The total target population consisted of 78,462 in-school adolescents enrolled in senior secondary schools across Edo State (Edo State Universal Basic Education Board, 2025).

Sample and Sampling Technique: A total of 400 adolescents (200 males, 200 females) were selected using stratified random sampling from six public and private schools across the three senatorial districts.

Instruments: The study employed three major instruments for data collection. Emotional stability was measured using the Emotional Stability Scale (ESS), which was adapted from Eysenck's Personality Inventory and had a reliability coefficient of 0.81. Social intelligence was assessed with the Tromsø Social Intelligence Scale (TSIS), which demonstrated a reliability coefficient of 0.84. Drug addiction tendencies were measured using the Drug Addiction Questionnaire (DAQ), a self-constructed instrument developed by the researcher, with a reliability coefficient of 0.86.

Data Collection: Questionnaires were administered and retrieved with the help of trained research assistants.

Data Analysis: Data were analyzed using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression analysis at 0.05 significance level.

4.0 RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between emotional stability and drug addiction among in-school adolescents in Edo State?

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Between Emotional Stability and Drug Addiction

Variable	r	p	N	Remark
Emotional Stability & Drug Addiction	–.46	< .01	400	Significant negative relationship

$\alpha < 0.05$

Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between emotional stability and drug addiction ($r = –.46$, $p < .01$). This indicates that adolescents with higher emotional stability were less likely to engage in drug use.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between social intelligence and drug addiction among in-school adolescents in Edo State?

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Between Social Intelligence and Drug Addiction

Variable	r	p	N	Remark
Social Intelligence & Drug Addiction	–.39	< .01	400	Significant negative relationship

$\alpha < 0.05$

The Pearson correlation showed a significant negative relationship between social intelligence and drug addiction ($r = –.39$, $p < .01$). This suggests that adolescents with higher social intelligence reported lower levels of drug involvement.

Research Question 3: Does emotional stability and social intelligence jointly predict drug addiction among in-school adolescents in Edo State?

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Drug Addiction from Emotional Stability and Social Intelligence

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
Constant	42.17	2.84	—	14.84	< .001
Emotional Stability	–0.51	0.07	–.38	–7.29	< .001
Social Intelligence	–0.42	0.08	–.27	–5.26	< .001

Model Summary: $R = .57$, $R^2 = .32$, Adjusted $R^2 = .32$, $F(2, 397) = 93.42$, $p < .01$

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the joint predictive power of emotional stability and social intelligence on drug addiction. The results showed that the two predictors jointly accounted for 32% of the variance in drug addiction ($R = .57$, $R^2 = .32$, $F(2, 397) = 93.42$, $p < .01$). Emotional stability ($\beta = –.38$, $p < .01$) and social intelligence ($\beta = –.27$, $p < .01$) were both significant predictors of drug addiction.

5.0 DISCUSSION

The first research question sought to determine the relationship between emotional stability and drug addiction. The result revealed a significant negative correlation ($r = –.46$, $p < .01$), indicating that adolescents with higher levels of emotional stability were less likely to engage in drug use. This finding is consistent with Adeboye and Salami (2022), who reported that adolescents with low emotional stability were more prone to anxiety, depression, and impulsivity, which in turn predisposed them to substance abuse. Similarly, Bello and Olukoya (2023) found that Nigerian secondary school students with low emotional stability had higher tendencies toward cannabis and codeine use. Ojedokun (2023) also noted that emotionally stable adolescents demonstrated better coping skills when faced with peer pressure, academic challenges, and family stressors, reducing their reliance on drugs as a coping mechanism. Taken together, these findings underscore the protective role of emotional stability in mitigating the risk of drug involvement among adolescents.

The second research question explored the relationship between social intelligence and drug addiction. The Pearson correlation analysis indicated a significant negative association ($r = –.39$, $p < .01$), suggesting that higher social intelligence was linked to lower levels of drug involvement. This aligns with the findings of Chinonso and Yusuf (2023), who reported that socially intelligent adolescents were more likely to form prosocial peer relationships and resist deviant influences. Ali and Ibrahim (2024) also observed that adolescents with higher social intelligence possessed stronger peer negotiation skills and conflict resolution abilities, which protected them from risky behaviors such as substance abuse. Similarly, Musa and Adekeye (2023) highlighted that socially intelligent students tended to affiliate with constructive peer groups, which not only enhanced their academic adjustment but also limited their exposure to drug-using peers. These findings affirm the importance of social intelligence as a psychosocial resource that shields adolescents from the influence of deviant peer networks.

The third research question examined the joint predictive power of emotional stability and social intelligence on drug addiction. The multiple regression analysis revealed that the two predictors jointly explained 32% of the variance in drug addiction ($R^2 = .32$, $F(2, 397) = 93.42$, $p < .01$). Both emotional stability ($\beta = –.38$, $p < .01$) and social intelligence ($\beta = –.27$, $p < .01$) were significant independent predictors. This finding implies that while each factor plays a unique protective role, their combined influence substantially reduces the likelihood of drug involvement among in-school adolescents. The result corroborates the argument of Aisien and Igbinedion (2024), who emphasized that psychological resources such as resilience, self-regulation, and social competence interact with contextual factors to determine adolescents' vulnerability to substance use.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study examined the roles of emotional stability and social intelligence in explaining drug addiction among in-school adolescents in Edo State. The study concludes that both variables are important psychological factors associated with adolescents' susceptibility to drug use. Emotional stability contributes to healthier emotional regulation, while social intelligence strengthens interpersonal judgment, making adolescents better able to resist negative influences. Together, these attributes function as protective factors that support positive behavioural choices.

6.1 Recommendations

1. Schools should integrate emotional stability training and social skills development into counselling programmes to strengthen students' psychological resilience.
2. Teachers and school counsellors should receive specialized training to identify early signs of emotional or social difficulties that may predispose students to drug involvement.
3. Policymakers should develop adolescent-focused intervention programmes that address both emotional regulation and social competence as core components of drug abuse prevention strategies.
4. Curriculum developers should embed structured courses or workshops on emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and interpersonal skills within the secondary school curriculum to enhance students' adaptive functioning.

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